AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph starting at page 8, line 17 as follows:

In an optional eighth step of the process in accordance with the present invention, shown schematically in Fig. 8 as step [[64]] S64 and illustrated in FIG. 7, the polish stop layer 16 is converted to silicon dioxide. A thermal oxidation process is used to grow or convert the polysilicon polish stop layer 16 to a dielectric material, for example, silicon dioxide. The converted polish stop layer 16 may now be removed with barrier layer 14 in a single step.

Please amend the paragraph starting at page 8, line 22 as follows:

After the formation of the STI feature 10, semiconductor devices may be formed on the semiconductor structure by depositing and etching subsequent layers that will benefit from the reduction in the variations in the topography. Subsequently, connections such as word lines may be formed using conventional techniques in order to establish electrical connections between the semiconductor device and other nodes (such as an I/O pad or Vss), the source [[~~14~~]] or the drain [[~~16~~]] of the device, as well as, a power supply or a ground, if desired. The formation of the connections is not shown.